

The **Quill**

A MAGAZINE FOR WRITERS, EDITORS, AND PUBLISHERS

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THE MAN WHO DECIDED HE WOULDN'T STAY DEAD • J. B. Hicklin

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AT DEADLINE

By R. L. P.

NOTICE our Southern accent! And we're not asking anyone's pardon for it, either. No, Suh!

Seems we've sorta been running in cycles. Last month the faculty folks had their inning—this issue most of our contributors come from below the Mason-Dixon line. And they have something to say.

Speaking of Southern accent, Mason-Dixon line, etc., maybe you're going to be surprised when you note in Richard Powell Carter's piece about country correspondents a reference to kids being burned by fire-crackers at Christmas time. No, it's not a typo. They celebrate Christmas and New Year's down South by shooting off a lot of fireworks.

How well the Editor and Mrs. Editor know that from experience! Two years ago we took our vacation in mid-winter. As darkness descended New Year's Eve we were pushing steadily toward Knoxville after crossing the Great Smokies in a heavy fog and narrowly missing a huge boulder that had toppled into the middle of the road.

Scarcely had we rolled into Knoxville than we heard a lot of explosions—louder and sharper than revolver or rifle shots and not loud enough for blasting reports. The nearer we got to the center of the city the more frequent they became. It was as if the city were being bombarded. To heighten this military effect, the streets were swarming with khaki-clad CCC boys. We soon learned that big fire-crackers were responsible for the reports.

IT HAD been a long, hard drive. We were very weary and retired shortly after dinner. The banging in the streets below continued with increasing fervor as midnight approached. Now and then a giant cracker dropped from a hotel window exploded in mid-air, the echoes beating back and forth between the buildings. Sleep scarcely seemed possible—but at last, in spite of the uproar, came oblivion.

Some time later there was a knocking at the door. An insistent, pounding, demanding knocking. Who could it be? We knew no one in Knoxville—no one back home knew we were there. Maybe it wasn't our door after all—

(Concluded on page 19)

Newspapers in Flux

By MARK ETHRIDGE

Publisher, the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch

WE WHO sit so close to the guns are apt to be impatient with the lack of progress in journalism. But consider the many changes that have come during the last 25 years.

Within that period, typesetting machines have come into their own. The old Morse wire and its human operator have given way to roaring machines bringing reams of copy to the telegraph editor's desk, and giving him gray hairs trying to sort it out where he used to get gray hairs trying to fill the paper. Old flat bed presses have all but disappeared from newspaper shops, and in their places are great high-speed presses that turn out 40,000 papers an hour and pick up new rolls, as old ones are exhausted, as they fly.

Engraving has been transformed from a crude wood block process into an art which gives you, within a few minutes after your picture has been delivered to the engraver, a graphic reproduction of the scene which you have witnessed. Telefoto and radio foto make it possible for a paper in New York to receive, within an hour or two after a picture has been

snapped, and to reproduce for its readers, a photograph of an event in Europe or in San Francisco. Rotograve and color processes now give us tinted or real life color for news pictures and advertising. That same speed which has been the motivating force of progress in industry has left its mark upon newspapers also. And the march continues.

But it is not about mechanical progress in newspapers which I desire to treat. They are merely the tangible evidences of change. There are less apparent and more subtle adjustments which have been made in newspapers as well.

WHEN the Yellow Kid made his debut in the old New York *World*, and was followed by such strips as Jiggs and Maggie, the Captain and the Kids, Nemo the Dream Walker, Mutt and Jeff, old-timers among newspapers considered them merely a flash in the pan, a sensational scheme devised under the stress of the great competition between the Pulitzers, the Ben- netts, the Hearsts and the Danas of



Mark Ethridge

New York journalism. But they have come to have a significant and interesting part in American life; they have indeed changed the content and character of American newspapers. They have made us daily magazines as well as purveyors of news. And when someone else decries the taste, and says such things are for morons only, I am always comforted by a quatrain I heard a few years ago:

See the pretty moron,
She does not give a damn,
I wish I were a moron—
My G—, perhaps I am!

I contend that Jiggs and Maggie, whose fundamental philosophy is to ridicule the social pretensions of America; the Gumps, a travesty on the domestic life of a likable blowhard; Popeye, with his yearning for spinach; Mr. Ripley with his believe-it-or-not oddities, and other such strips and cartoons have made a definite contribution to the pleasure of the masses in this country, as well as to the circulation figures of newspapers. Hardly any American newspaper today, except the New York *Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, carry less than eight comic strips a day. Some newspapers carry as many as 40 in their Sunday colored sections.

If it still be contended that these things are for the low-grade intelligence, then I say that the change in features has not been confined to that field by any means. There has been, in fact, in recent years a scientific effort on the part of newspapers through questionnaires and surveys to ascertain what their readers like.

On the *Times-Dispatch* we take a poll of reader preference twice a year and shape our features accordingly. I think it is interesting, and significant

SIGNIFICANT changes have marked the pageant of journalism in the last 25 years. Equally significant changes are yet to come if the press is to keep pace with the changing world; to meet the competition of radio, other technical developments and the news reviews; to fulfill its responsibilities.

These changes—past, present and future—are discussed in comprehensive, plain-spoken fashion in the accompanying article by Mark Ethridge, publisher of the Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*. His observations were presented originally before the University of North Carolina's Press Institute.

Mr. Ethridge's first newspaper experience came as a high school student when the editor of the *Meridian (Miss.) Star* asked him to write of school events and also contribute a column on baseball. Since then he has served on the *Columbus (Ga.) Enquirer-Sun* and the *Macon Telegraph*, rising from reporter to associate editor over a period of 14 years; with the *Consolidated Press* in Washington for a year; with the *New York Sun* for a year and a half; and acted as assistant general manager of the *Washington Post* for 14 months before going to Richmond in December, 1934, as general manager of the *Times-Dispatch*. He became president and publisher of the *Times-Dispatch* in April, 1935.

of the great change which visualization has wrought in newspapers, that out of the 15 leading features in our daily paper, 13 of them have visual, rather than type appeal. For instance, the cartoon ranks first, the daily picture page second, a small cartoon of the "nut" type third, and on the list are three oddity type features and eight comics. The appeal these features have suggests the possibility of better exploitation of a field which radio cannot invade until at least television is perfected.

Women, we find, have their own special interests. Where men are interested primarily in political news and columns, in market reports and sports, women like to read about these things, in this order, as nearly as we can ascertain:

Health,
Good taste or etiquette,
Food news and recipes,
Society news,
Fashions,

Love, as contained in advice to those who have tangled lives, and, oddly enough, children come just ahead of gardens, while beauty belongs in the lower brackets.

Among other general interest features which rank high are movie and dramatic columns, Winchell's New York keyhole column, the radio program, voice of the people, or the letter column, and questions and answers. There are, of course, limited interest columns such as those which review books, and deal with bridge, antiques, stamps, church and financial activities. I have labored the point of features and indulged in exhaustive recitation so that you may have some idea of the scope of feature development during this quarter of a century. The editor who ignores all the fundamental interests and quirks of human nature involved in the features which I have cited is only a little less than dumb these days, unless he wants to restrict his circulation for definite reasons.

NO LESS marked have been the changes in reporting for newspapers. I remember very well the days when hard-boiled picture snatchers and brilliant drunks were glorified as typical of the profession. Reporters used to think it was necessary for them to become tramps as it was for printers, if they were to round out their experience and their adventures.

In our office, when I was young, we had a brilliant and erratic drunk who symbolized, for us younger members of the staff, the glamor and the romance of newspaper life to which the movies took a copyright a few years ago. He told us tall tales. He said that he went out once to cover the

opening of a new brewery and when he got back to the office, some months later, an annex had been built. I do not know whether that is true or not; I do know that we sent him out once to cover a circus and he fell in with some old cronies. He came back two years later, laid his hat down, took his coat off and went to work as if nothing had happened.

I know another reporter who, having been sent to cover a lecture by Frances Willard, the great temperance advocate, tarried too long in the tap rooms on the way, so that the meeting was over when he got there. He sat down and wrote a grand speech which Frances Willard might have made, had she not been detained, unfortunately, by a train wreck, so that she never arrived. The reporter discovered that only the next morning when his paper carried his report of Miss Willard's speech on the front page, and the opposition carried a story saying she did not speak. He took a box car for Denver without calling back for five days' pay due him. He was, as I said, the symbol of the old-time reporter, but that type has largely passed out of newspapers. The drunk is not tolerated any longer; the irresponsible man is weeded out, and newspapers are earnestly trying, I believe, to establish responsibility, integrity, accuracy and professional skill as standards for their men.

It is more and more difficult to make good on a newspaper. It is no longer a matter of being a good ambulance chaser, or a good police reporter, able to fraternize with policemen in a friendly way. That is important, of course, but not as important as it was. The man who goes into journalism now must enter it as a profession. He can no longer have a vast ignorance of the forces that move about him.

If he aspires to anything more than leg work, if indeed he desires to become an editor, he must have a broad understanding of world affairs. He must know, as well as the man who does the editorial, the significance of an election in Britain, or a decree in Germany, or a military move in Ethiopia. He must have some understanding of economics and of social measures if he is to give his readers an intelligent cross-section of the day's news; he must know something about the stock market if he is to fit the day's rise or decline into its proper place. He must know something about the elements of science if he is to give the proper play to stories of scientific advance and discovery.

TWO factors have always governed the make-up of front pages of news-

papers: The significance and interest of stories. Significance is becoming more and more important in a world which is experiencing vast social and political upheavals. All an editor used to have to do to make up his front page was to take a few crime stories, a few local stories, a good one or two off the wire and make up his dummy. Crime is becoming less and less important as front page news. Much of it carried over the wires goes into the wastebasket to make room for more interesting and more significant matter—for stories that really affect the lives, the economic and social destinies of all of us.

Men who are limited to the intelligence of police reporters cannot comprehend or interpret for their readers the vast changes in our structure of life.

I am afraid I must confess to the feeling that reporting has not kept pace with mechanical and feature changes in newspapers. There has been an advance from the old days, to be sure, but there is still an inadequacy. The fact that newspapers have stuck to the old-style reporting has given rise to the so-called "background" columns which have sprung up, or flourished under the present administration.

There is a demand on the part of the intelligent reader these days to know not only what is happening, but why it is happening and how what transpires fits into the general political and social pattern. The popular acceptance of these columns and of such weekly reviews as *Time* and *News-Week*, are, I think, an indictment of the adequacy of news reporting and handling. There is still not available to American newspapers, except those few which maintain bureaus of their own, a competent day-to-day story of what is happening in Washington and why it is happening. Developments in a situation are still treated as isolated incidents without any great attempt on the part of press associations to catch up the threads of a connected story. I hope, and believe, there will be a relaxation of the rigid standards which have placed reporting in a stuffy mold—a relaxation which will permit newspapermen to give a rounded, rather than a lopsided picture of what is going on.

WHAT form reporting of the future will take I do not know, but I believe there will be some attempt to evaluate the importance and significance of the story along with its telling. I realize the dangers inherent upon that; I realize that it might easily lead to distortion and to injection of editorial opinion in the news columns. But we are in ac-

[Continued on page 16]

Those Country Scribes—Bless 'Em

They String Out Plenty of Tripe, But Sometimes They Scoop the World

By RICHARD POWELL CARTER

IT WAS Christmas time, and a copy-reader had just remarked that the news was particularly devoid of the usual holiday mishaps. No big wrecks. No drownings. No murders. Just a few little boys burned by firecrackers. Another copyreader, struggling with a Sunday social letter, agreed, and continued editing accounts of the stereotyped doings of society. Wearily he turned to the last page of the letter from Dogville, prepared to pencil out half of another holiday party. But this is what he read:

"... Nothing much of interest happened here this Christmas. Everyone is having a good time. The only thing to mar the festivities was the fact that an automobile carrying Joe Podunk and his wife and five children broke through the ice of the river here yesterday and all of them were drowned..."

That's the story they used to tell around the rim of the copydesk on the Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*. (They don't remember exactly what the copyreader said, but it wasn't nice—not outside of the city room, anyway.) They told me the story was true, and every newspaperman who has handled any state news at all will agree that it probably is not exaggerated.

THROUGH the hands of a state news editor there passes a continual stream of bad copy, an occasional story that is brilliantly handled, and a mass of good stuff that must be salvaged from between the lines. The state news editor, however, undoubtedly puts up with more tripe than anyone else in the city room.

But for all the conglomerate mass of bad copy that reaches a state editor's desk there is compensation in the knowledge that the country correspondents are doing what they think is right, and that they are covering for the paper. Every paper really is dependent upon them for news that accounts for much of its circulation.

I have heard newspapermen say that education of country correspondents to the requirements of their paper is an impossibility, but I fail to see why careful supervision and well placed suggestions cannot develop the rankest country writer of Sunday social letters into a valuable newsgatherer. Press services cover states with precision, but there are places and sources they cannot reach—and even the press services have their country correspondents, their stringers who are doing a good job every day. But for the news that the press services misses, the country correspondents must provide coverage—else it is lost.



Richard P. Carter

WHEN the police chief of Dogville, or Podunkville, or Countryville, recovers a stolen car or makes a Brunswick stew for the yearly gathering of the Odd Fellows, that's news for that particular community. And no one is there to cover it but the country correspondent.

The job of editing the state's news was taken most seriously on the Greensboro (N. C.) *Daily News* when I was there. I know of other papers that stress the same thing. The Roanoke (Va.) *Times* maintains a state department, and does a thorough job of handling all the state news in the western part of the Old Dominion. In Greensboro, they still pay much attention to their state desk—it was the pet of the managing editor when I was there, because he knew it had built his circulation, and he recognized the value of mentioning it when something of local interest happened in a community.

The *Daily News* maintained a bureau in Raleigh, the state capital, and in Washington. The Washington wire opened each evening about seven, and closed about eight, when the Raleigh copy began flowing in. Raleigh usually signed off about nine-thirty.

Each bureau dealt almost exclusively with news pertaining directly to the state, which meant that all *Associated Press* copy had to be compared carefully with bureau copy in order to avoid duplication. The *Daily News* stressed state copy, and the readers knew it and like it.

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HAVING trouble with your country correspondents—in getting them to understand the sort of stuff you expect from them about their respective areas?

Then perhaps the accompanying comment and suggestions from Richard Powell Carter, former state editor of the Greensboro (N. C.) *Daily News* and at present director of publicity for Washington and Lee University, an instructor in the Lee School of Journalism there and also alumni editor, will help you iron out the difficulties.

Mr. Carter was graduated from Washington and Lee in 1929. He was a member of the Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch* staff, part of the time as Sunday feature editor, for three years before moving to the Greensboro paper. He spent last summer as state capitol reporter for the *Associated Press* in Richmond and has contributed to several magazines.



William S. White

THERE is a second dimension to news coverage in Washington since the *Associated Press* has added its regional service. Through it the national capital has been made one vast city "beat."

The service still is a comparative youngster in its third year—it really got going in August of 1933 amid the greatest, most feverish tempest of news since World War days—but it long since has come of age. Today, AP regional reporters pour out 30,000 words a day, write literally a daily history of everything occurring in Washington of local and sectional interest from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border.

In addition to the original task of covering all the broad capital news for the nation at large, AP now carries on with the responsibility of telling of the March of Government as it applies intimately to Oregon, Maine or New York.

This was a new kind of press association staff that broke the regional trail in Washington; but it gave effective recognition to a very old news maxim: Get the local (or sectional) angle.

THE explanation of the development of this policy of regional coverage is as simple as the maxim itself. It came spontaneously, says Byron Price, the Washington bureau chief, out of the plain fact that *Associated Press* member newspapers needed such coverage. How much they needed it was illustrated best in that roaring period nearly three years ago when government was doing so many things so quickly; illustrated by an inundation of inquiries and requests that came every hour from every section to the Washington bureau.

The Federal authority was closing

Regional Reporters

By WILLIAM S. WHITE

New York Staff, the Associated Press

HERE is an interesting phase of Washington journalism with which you may or may not be familiar—the way in which one of the major press services furnishes its members with summaries of the events taking place on Capitol Hill that have particular interest and significance to their respective regions.

The service is described, fittingly enough, by William S. White, who served in the ranks of the regional reporters in Washington handling news pertaining to Texas and Oklahoma.

Mr. White has served nine years with the Associated Press, joining that organization's staff in Texas. He worked in three Texas bureaus, as rewrite man, member of the capitol legislative staff, relay editor, political writer and on various state assignments, before being assigned to the regional service in Washington. Subsequently he was made a member of the Washington feature staff and is now stationed in New York.

and reopening banks; it was setting out to codify industry in every corner and section, city and hamlet. In one fairly typical day the bureau received 72 queries, most of them for stories which required research and definite knowledge of the regions.

The steadily increasing connection of government with the everyday affairs of its citizens, even the most obscure of them, demanded recorders who had not only the wit to find out just what was going on, but the special background knowledge to interpret it fully and precisely in terms of individual states, cities—and papers.

HERE is what was done: From every section trained *Associated Press* men were brought to Washington. There was no qualification more requisite than an intimate understanding of the states they were to represent—their political situations, their economic position, their interests in terms of news.

One man works exclusively on the news of each of the more populous states, such as New York and Pennsylvania. The remainder of the states were grouped on the basis of geographic and economic affinity. Thus, states like Louisiana and Mississippi, neighbors in many economic interests as well as in physical fact, are represented by a single reporter.

Because of the intimate connection of the men with their states (and some

think in that direction so much that they take in those states a kind of proprietary pride that never flags) their copy has been welcomed to an extraordinary degree. It is no uncommon thing for a Washington *Associated Press* regional story to lead many member newspapers in the state to which it was sent, barring, of course, those days in which extraordinary general or local news is breaking.

The big secret of all this is no secret at all, but is summed up in the familiar "background." A statement or incident that standing in a general story might be worth upon its face scarcely more than a line may be the key to a local, state or sectional story of the first rank. The regional man pounces with gusto on these keys, and he knows how to use them.

FOR purposes of identification, men in the bureau assigned to general news are called "general staffers" as against "regional staffers." They work together, under the general direction of Bureau Chief Price, under the general philosophy that a story's a story whether it's top-lined in 10 papers or 1,300.

The staffs thus get a great deal of help from each other—and, incidentally, the editor who reads the combined daily report has read plenty!

Regional men keep in daily communication with their congressional



Below the Senate chamber in the Capitol building in Washington is this room for the regional reporters. Here much of the copy for afternoon papers is written and sent to Associated Press headquarters in the Star Building by printer. All morning leads are written in headquarters. This busy group is made up, from left to right, of Henry Dorris, regional man for Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky; Carson Lyman, covering for Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota; Ben H. Conner, regional reporter for Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Utah; Paul H. Barkley (reading printer copy), for the Carolinas; Frank Le May (in shirt sleeves), for Georgia, Alabama and Florida, and Donald Cameron, assigned to Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire.

Below, at the left, is C. D. Watkins, editor-in-chief of the A. P.'s regional staff.



C. D. Watkins

delegations to a degree manifestly impossible for the general senate and house staffs occupied with floor and committee duty.

The primary reason for such contacts is to keep abreast of state news; but a great deal more than state news frequently results. Senators and representatives 'in on' the kind of plans and plots that make great national news—the sort of thing over which the lid is supposed to be dropped—not infrequently whisper a judicious hint to the regional man. Thus, very little of public nature goes in in 435 house offices and 96 senate suites that the AP doesn't find out about.

THE service is so designed that it is a very real and powerful added arm to all member newspapers. It is for the smaller newspaper a Washington bu-

reau of incomparably greater size and mobility than any such publication might hope to set up on its own. It frees the Washington staff representatives of the larger papers from the necessity of trying to cover a bewildering variety of news, permitting them to concentrate on those stories in which their editors have particular interest.

Here is an illustration:

An executive of one of the most widely known of American newspapers, finding his own Washington staff swamped, called on the AP for regional coverage. The service he got prompted a warmly commendatory expression from him, particularly as to the intimate knowledge of the reporter of that paper's needs.

Again, the managing editor of a member newspaper several hundred miles away asked and obtained special coverage on a Washington event of the greatest importance to his readers. The story, said he, was handled with an interpretation so accurate that had he sent a staff man he could have expected no more.

Substantially the same story could be told of many other members—those with Washington staffs and those with none.

AS to the regional man's work he leads, as a reporter, the good life. He is accepted as a specialist in his area and the ramifications of his job make him pretty much of a free agent dur-

ing most of his day. He has no set run to cover and so he roams no routine trail. A tip, an assignment, or a general idea for a story may lead him to the Capitol at 10 a. m. and to a downtown department at 11. His day, beginning at the office at 9:30 a. m., is one of many and varied contacts.

Special requests are "musts" of the first rank—but outside of these his job is to develop original material. Through the day he dictates his spot news by telephone, or sends it over a special regional teletype from the Capitol. His night leads for morning papers and his mail stories and state columns he writes in the office.

The newspapers from his states come to him every day; these he reads closely to keep up his back-home contacts. He watches all the material dealing with his states issued by the government. He checks the departmental handouts but frequently can wastebasket them; chances are he had the story a good while before it was announced officially.

The constant stream of copy from 23 regional reporters—21 of them representing states and two Latin America and United States insular possessions—moves in all directions simultaneously over a desk headed by Regional Editor C. D. Watkins and numbering four other editors. The average day's output of 30,000 words is routed by a system of regional channels to the sections where it is of interest.



Courtesy Better Homes & Gardens

Mushing in the North

THE genesis of the whole thing was that a woman needed killing . . . and got it! For if poor old Joe S—hadn't played *root-a-toot-toot* with the she-wolf he was living with he wouldn't have been sentenced to hang and I wouldn't have met his lawyer. And if I hadn't met that worthy gentleman I would still be doing a ring-around-the-rosy with a lot of unhung muggs as a detective for the District Attorney of Los Angeles County instead of destroying the mentality of the future generation—so the parson says—by butchering detective stories in exchange for bread.

That sounds miserably involved, but it was like this: I was a criminal deputy sheriff under Red Bob Clark, then Sheriff of Ventura County and now United States Marshall for Southern California, when poor Joe started his civic-betterment campaign. Joe's only mistake was in his choice of time and locale; he picked a nice sunny Sunday afternoon and about a dozen witnesses. Now that's always bad! So we rushed down and heaved poor Joe in the hoosegow on a technicality—that being that the woman was dead.

Of course there was a trial and the jury made a mistake and convicted Joe. The Judge gave poor Joey the rope.

ENTER the hero, none other than Erle Stanley Gardner!

Now as everyone that can read, subscribe to a lending library, or hobble to the cinema knows, Erle is aces in the detective story racket. Not as many realize, perhaps, that he is also very much aces in the legal racket as well. Erle had nothing to do with the

I've Found a Way

Confessions of an Ex-Detective Who Gave Up Facts for Fiction

By LESLIE T. WHITE

trial, but after it was over and everybody was referring to good old Joey in the past tense, Erle grabbed the helm, hopped all over the Judge, the Governor and Lord-knows-who-else . . . and as a result, Gentle Joe is still eating beans on the State.

Well, my allegiance swung from Abe Lincoln to Erle Stanley and when he told me I could write I accepted it without a murmur. I did, and s'help me, that's all there is to it.

I'm a believer in the *breaks* . . . if you take advantage of them. My break in this fiction business was to make the acquaintance of a real professional at the beginning. It wasn't until I started selling consistently, and knew I could do it, that I commenced to meet the "literary intelligentsia" and was made to realize the excessive labor pains involved in the birth of a simple story. Honestly, I believe that if I had encountered these serious individuals in the beginning, I would have been whipped before I started . . . as so many potential writers are.

Frankly, I'm opposed to these little cliques that sit around and read each others stuff out loud, curse all editors and sob in unison over each rejection slip . . . that is, if you want to *sell*. It may be fun from a social point of view—if you can take it—but it's rank poison if you want to know what a publisher's check looks like.

In the first place, fiction you write to sell isn't aimed at a group of writers who are worrying about climax, first crisis, denouement, et al; it's written for a certain minority that wants to read a certain magazine. Anyway, most professionals wouldn't recognize a *crisis* if it walked up and shook hands with them.

ONE successful writer told me that every time he sits down to his mill to grind out a yarn he shuts his eyes and envisions his audience, several million strong, stretched out before him. He figures out what *that* mob wants, and

he writes to *them* . . . and to hell with the critics.

Well, that's one way, but it would make me self-conscious. Anyhow, I often write in my pajamas and I'd have to dress. I prefer to blaze away at the editor; he's my buffer. His job is to *know* what those million readers want, and for me, it's more practical to *slant* towards the editor. And they aren't bad guys, and gals, sometimes, at that.

Most novice writers suffer the delusion that their stuff is dictated and inspired direct from Heaven; when they ask for advice they want praise, and that is one of the 57 reasons why I long ago swore off reading the manuscripts of friends or otherwise. If I wanted to get the reader's reaction to a story I would prefer the unbiased opinion of a truck driver or a salesgirl to a college professor, provided of course, that neither the sales-gal or the hack-herder had writing aspirations. The chances are ten to one they would be interested in the *story*, not the punctuation.

All professionals have their own peculiar method of working, especially the detective story pros because they're peculiar to start with. I don't know two who follow the same routine. Personally, I usually write a yarn the same way I used to solve a murder case. I begin with what I always hope is an intriguing situation and solve the rest as I go along. Now please don't telegraph me that my method is wrong—I'll stipulate to that, but whenever I try the standard method the story is cold.

Once upon a time I subscribed to a course on "How to Write" and learned that I was wrong. In writing the detective and mystery story, said the good book, you start at the end and build your plot up to the beginning; in other words you know in advance just where the story is going and what is going to happen. I guess that's a pretty swell of way of doing it, but you would have to be a very bright

to Make Crime Pay

boy and smart enough to fool your reader every minute of the time. I'm not smart, so I just write the story and figure that as long as I don't know what is going to happen next, it's a cinch the reader won't know either.

A NOTHER bone-head play marking the novice is this idea of writing a beautiful story and then wondering, after you've written it, where in the heck it will sell. You can't sell it to Howard Bloomfield of *Adventure* because it has too many bedroom scenes; it won't go with Street and Smith's *Love Story* because virtue doesn't triumph; no sale at *Argosy* or the *Saturday Evening Post* because you've made Hitler stab the Pope, and *American Mercury* is out because they don't want the damn thing anyhow. In my opinion, selling is an integral part of the writing profession and should be treated as such.

The first step in selling, of course, is to learn what the buyer—the editor—wants. No, no! don't write and ask him; study his rag! Not the *big names*, for those babies can sell *anything*, but the unknown who is blazing his mark. He has something, and if you study the magazine long enough, you'll find the editorial slant. Every magazine has a certain vague but rigid formula, or list of taboos, call it anything you want. The trick is to analyze the market you want to hit, memorize these channel buoys and so chart your course accordingly. If you're a good pilot and have any sort of a cargo you will dock and be paid off, but if you get pig-headed and try to barge in and force your own way,

well, the odds are that you will get hung up on the shoals.

As I inferred earlier in this opus, the detective story is a specialized field. This form of yarn requires considerably more *plot* than, say, the love story or the adventure tale, but it is not, as so many novices believe, merely a mathematical problem with the sum total tacked on the end. You must have good characterization, logical motivation and a nebulous something . . . well, I guess we'll have to coin a phrase . . . let's call it *psychological-atmosphere*.

To write good detective stories you must know *how* people feel in time of tragedy and grief and *what* they do. That is the reason why, I believe, that most of our prolific detective story writers have been lawyers, police reporters, and a very few, detectives. If you read their stuff with a critical eye you can tell by what route they entered the fiction fold. Take Erle Gardner's famous "Perry Mason" tales—could anyone other than a clever lawyer have written those?

YOU can get ordinary atmosphere from books and conversation; setting can be observed; you can gaff plots out of newspapers and the wells of your mind, but only personal experience can give you that subtle *feel*; the instinctive reaction of a suffering human. Reporters who cover police beats develop it, lawyers sense the emotional reaction of witness and juror; so does a veteran copper. And since a detective story deals with crime and trouble it is vital that the writer should know how others react;



Courtesy Better Homes & Gardens

The Author and "Sandy"

how a woman takes it when you walk in and break the news that her husband has just been murdered; what a man really says when he is dying, and so on. Books can describe the scene, but only the man who has lived through it for years can absorb the real feeling that exists. Nor can you depend on imagination consistently for once your public catches up with you . . . taps!

There's a lot of dispute on that point, however, and after several years of professionalism in the detective story field, I am still uncertain whether my ten years of crime fighting was a help, or a hindrance. Harry Bedford-Jones,

[Concluded on page 14]

ADVENTURE called Leslie T. White at an early age and he tried to satisfy his craving for excitement in a wide variety of ways. He fired on a railroad; rushed behind the malamutes in the frozen North; rode horses after cattle in the Southwest. He served two years in a Scottish regiment during the World War, wearing kilts and hardening his knees.

Periodically he settled down to some prosaic occupation such as photography or bookkeeping in an office. But his nerves refused to stand the dullness. Eventually he turned to police work. He became a ranger, was injured but won a place in the Sheriff's office at Ventura, Calif., serving under Bob Clark, whom he terms "one of the greatest sheriffs the West has produced." Then came the police department, followed by an appointment as chief identification expert—dealing with handwriting, fingerprints, forgeries, etc.—for the District Attorney of Los Angeles County.

Then, six years ago, he laid aside his gun and shield and began writing fiction. At last he found the satisfaction he had been seeking. In the last six years he has turned out more than a million words, 95 per cent of it dealing with crime and mystery. The remainder covers a variety of topics, including dogs. He lives in a picturesque old home in the giant red woods with his wife, their son and daughter, their pets and trophies. They call it, appropriately enough, "Mystery Ranch."

IT'S awkward to be dead when you aren't."

At least this is the conclusion reached by Robert Quillen, of Fountain Inn, S. C., internationally known paragraphing columnist and editorial writer, since "in an idle and careless moment" he wrote his own obituary and funeral story and had it printed in his *Fountain Inn Tribune* several years ago.

Explaining that he was preparing the copy in advance "to help good things along," Mr. Quillen wrote:

"Robert Quillen died last night of a bronchial asthma.

"He was a writer of paragraphs and short editorials. He always hoped to write something of permanent value . . . but never got around to it.

"In his youth he felt an urge to reform the world . . . decided he would be doing well if he kept himself out of jail.

"The funeral service was held at the Baptist church this afternoon . . . complying with Mr. Quillen's last request, his wife had imported a uniformed brass band which marched in front of the procession playing 'The Old Gray Mare Came Tearing Out of the Wilderness.'

"Workmen covered the grave with a granite slab bearing the inscription, 'Submitted to the Publisher by Robert Quillen.'"

SOON after the edition had been dropped into the mail bags condolences began to filter in from far and near. Also requests for more details.

In the next issue of the *Tribune*, under the heading of "Resurrection," he explained how he happened to write his "obituary," assured his friends that he was still very much alive, and hoped to remain so for many years to come.

"This week," he wrote, "I have a privilege that is shared by few men on earth—that of kicking about being dead.

"Last week, in an idle and careless moment and without other thought than a desire to amuse my neighbors, I wrote and printed in the *Tribune* my own obituary and funeral story.

"Written in the past tense, it probably sounded authentic enough to anybody who didn't read the introduction or know how to recognize a joke.

"Anyway, it was loaded with dynamite and I should have known better. The dynamite was enough to blast me into Kingdom Come."

BUT this was not the first time that "Bob" Quillen's pranks had attracted public attention.

Back in 1926 he startled the public

The Man Who Decided F



This is the temple-style studio Bob Quillen built several years ago to insure himself privacy when preparing his features and paragraphs for some 400 newspapers.

with the announcement that he intended paying a long deferred honor to "Mother Eve."

"I am a direct descendant of Eve on my mother's side," explained the editor simply, as he drafted plans for a marble monument to the memory of the first woman. "Others who have done far less for the human race than this woman have been honored with memorial slabs," he added.

The handsome monument was placed on the front lawn of his cozy brick bungalow—close to the circular fountain that bubbles in front of his miniature Greek temple office building. He arranged an insurance policy to provide for the memorial's perpetual care.

SO WIDELY has Mr. Quillen's name become known that hundreds of persons passing through the Carolinas veer their routes to include Fountain Inn. And while "Bob" Quillen is a prince of good fellows, he is also a busy man. What with writing an editorial, 21 paragraphs, an Aunt Het and a Willie Willis for Sunday papers, he hasn't time to chat with every admirer who wants to see the man who does all of this, and learn first-hand from him how it is done. So when he erected his studio building several years ago, he placed over the arched doorway a bronze sign, "Keep Out, Darn You."

"Many think of me as a fire-eating son-of-a-gun scared of nothin'—a howling curly wolf seeking whom he may

devour, and things like that," laughed Mr. Quillen. "It's funny the way a man is judged by his writings. I have been called everything from a long-whiskered sage to a lunatic.

"And to people here at home I am just a soft-hearted, bald-headed old cooter who likes common folks and doesn't like uppity ones—who never intentionally hurts anybody's feelings, perennially serves as an easy mark for people with hard luck stories, and is led about by the nose by his women folks. In fact, the contrast between what I am and what strangers think me is so great that I always meet them with reluctance. I dread that look on their faces which means: 'My gosh! Is this it?'

"People who live in distant places read my stuff in their home town papers," he continued, "and wonder what kind of a fellow is writing it. They write to me, either direct or in care of their home papers and ask me all kinds of questions.

"I have been answering them, as briefly as possible; but if I make my answers too short, they sound unfriendly, and if I take time to write decent letters, I don't have time for anything else.

"Each person who writes feels entitled to an answer, and would be sore at me if he didn't get it. He knows I have five spare minutes to give to him.

"But there are many more like him, scattered all the way from Dan to Beersheba, and trying to be courteous to all of them, as a fellow should, takes

ed He Wouldn't Stay Dead

Bob Quillen Printed Own Obituary, Funeral Story; Then Came Retraction

By J. B. Hicklin

a lot of time—not to mention the stamps. Perhaps I can reach some of these friends and answer their questions in this way. So here goes. You asked for it!

MY PATERNAL grandfather was a giant of a man who grubbed stumps in a pioneer land six days a week and rode long distances on Sunday to preach hell-fire and damnation. He was Scotch-Irish and his family name had once contained a 'Mc,' as it still does back in Ulster County, Ireland. He was a dour, hard man, who made wonderful wagons and once took me by the seat of the pants and threw me into a watering trough because I had not obeyed him and remained away.

"My maternal grandfather was a Frenchman. He had one of the best farms in Indiana and raised draft horses that he sold at \$500 a span—a lot of money in those days—but he was too free-handed to get rich and finally decided the country was at fault and moved out to Kansas where he raised mules.

"Dad went out with one family and mother with the other—they hadn't met yet—and settled down to grow up with the country. Dad taught school.

And mother was his star pupil. So that explains that.

"When they were married, dad quit teaching and started in to learn the newspaper business. I suppose he was about 25. And from that time on, until his death at the age of 59, he wrote and wrote and wrote. He was the best educated man I ever knew, and the bravest and the sanest. He never got rich, for newspapermen never do; but he made enough money to spoil his family and make spendthrifts of us all. Rather, he taught us that money was merely a convenience—something to use—and that any man who loved it for its own sake was a little weak above the ears. I've told all of this because you can't judge a man fairly unless you know his background.

NOW we come to me. I was born in a little town called Syracuse—then just a few frame houses and store buildings, including dad's print shop—a Kansas prairie town a few miles from the Colorado line. The reason I wasn't born out on a claim was because dad brought mother into town for the big event. It was lonely out there, anyway. Once a big rattler lay down at the steps and she was afraid to go out-



Robert Quillen

doors all day. And frequently in dry weather, herds of longhorn steers would surround the house, bellowing for water, and frighten mother out of her wits.

"I don't remember western Kansas. Some other town got the county seat and dad left Syracuse and went back east—meaning the eastern part of Kansas. There, in a fat land where the farmers raised corn and alfalfa to fatten hogs and steers, and made oodles of money, dad published a newspaper and taught his boys to set type and write things.

"I went to school until I was 16. That wasn't enough, but I had sold pen and ink drawings and seen them in print; I had written and printed a little monthly magazine; I knew I could make a living anywhere as a printer, and might get by as a cartoonist or reporter; and the course of true love wasn't running smooth, anyway, so I decided to strike out on my own.

"Dad went to the station to see me off. 'I think you're a fool,' said he; 'but good luck.' The first part of his statement proved correct.

THE next few years were full of wanderings and queer adventures. I knew how it felt to go hungry day after day. I walked until my feet bled and the blood bubbled through my shoe eyelets and said 'Swish' when I walked. I worked in a dozen states, I crossed an ocean. I learned to smoke cigarets and to drink liquor. I made some tough acquaintances. But I didn't beg or steal (though I did beat an old chap in Lincoln, Neb., out of a good supper) and through it all I kept trying to write and draw, and kept my reverence for good women and my faith in the Lord.

"At 19 I came to Fountain Inn. I

WHAT sort of men are they—the men behind the by-lines of the current news stories of the day; dispatches from Washington; cables from storm centers in foreign lands; comic strips; features and columns?

From time to time The Quill tries to bring you the answer—to bring you face to face through photographs and words with men who are playing an active part in the press pageant of the day—to give you something of their background, their pathways along the inky trail. Also something of their attitude, philosophy and comment regarding their work.

This month the subject is Robert Quillen, the paragraphing, home-spun philosopher of Fountain Inn, N. C.; the interviewer another North Carolinian, J. B. Hicklin. The latter is deserving of a story about himself. Nearly six years ago he became "fed up" with the regularity of newspaper work, the monotony of a beat or being chained to a desk. So he set out on a career of freelancing that has brought him a host of interesting experiences.

Meet, through him, one of the most widely syndicated newspapermen in the world.

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had spent a cold winter in Pennsylvania, and when a man down here offered me the job of establishing a new paper in a little town that hoped to be a county seat I took it gladly and came down to hear the mocking birds. I had dreamed of the South for years.

"I stayed here that time just long enough—three months I think—to win the heart of a gentle lady who was my comrade for 17 years. Georgia for a while; then two years on the Pacific Coast; then back to Fountain Inn to establish the *Tribune*. Nothing happened for ten years, except that I worked hard and kept bombarding the magazines with stuff they didn't want.

"Then a Greenville (S. C.) newspaper asked me to write a daily column of paragraphs and things began to transpire. The *Literary Digest* saw the paragraphs and began to quote them—sometimes 20 at a clip. Mr. George Horace Lorimer saw the paragraphs in the *Digest* and wrote me to ask if I would like to write something for the *Saturday Evening Post*. I would. In fact, I had done a lot of it, without results. But this time I wrote by invitation, and for a year or two had a weekly page called 'Small Town Stuff.'

"About the time I began doing that, Mr. J. H. Adams, then editor of the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, wrote and asked me to visit him. He had seen my stuff somewhere—not in the *Post* yet—and wanted me to do a daily editorial and a little batch of paragraphs. He offered me \$85 a week, but I countered with the suggestion that he pay me only \$50 and let me stay at home. I didn't want to give up my own paper. I kept the *Evening Sun* job for about five years.

BUT that's getting ahead of the story. About the time I began writing for the *Post*, the N. E. A. people gave me a job writing a daily batch of paragraphs for the Scripps-Howard papers. That didn't last long, for the Chicago syndicate that now handles my stuff appeared on the horizon. It wanted a man to launch a paragraph service, and the boss went to New York to see Mr. Rodgers, who clipped paragraphs for the *Literary Digest*.

"Quillen is the man," he said. So the syndicate wrote and offered me a contract, and there I was in the syndicate business. The paragraphs flourished. I quit the *Saturday Evening Post* job and began two more features called 'Aunt Het' and 'Willie Willis.' Then I quit the *Baltimore Sun* job and began to syndicate my daily editorials.

"That was enough work for one man, but Jim Derieux (formerly of Columbia, S. C.) of the *American Magazine*

came down one day and asked me to write a monthly editorial for him. I did it for a year or so, under the caption, "If You Ask Me," but even that little extra was too much and I had to quit.

NOW, I do nothing except syndicate work—an editorial, 21 paragraphs, an Aunt Het and a Willie Willis every day and a longer Aunt Het for Sunday papers. All told, the five features are in about 400 papers, mostly in this country and Canada, but also in London, Manila and Honolulu. Little Willie is translated into Dutch and appears in several Holland papers under the title of 'Pimmie Pimmel.'

"Of course, I run the *Tribune* on the side, but that is fun—not work. I've written two books, 'The Path Wharton Found,' and 'One Man's Religion.' Both were printed and both flopped, though I keep on getting a little royalty each year.

"For the rest, I was 49 years old on the 25th of last March; my second wife is a Fountain Inn girl I used to like when she was a little kid with red curls down her back; I have an adopted daughter, I weigh 140 in the buff and am as bald as a cooter."

THAT'S "Bob" Quillen's account of his life and "death." But his Fountain Inn neighbors who know him best would wish for him a more eloquent "obituary."

Even they do not know the extent of his philanthropy and charity, for he moves secretly and alone. But they do know that it has been his money with which a number of boys and girls paid for their tuition at college. And they know that more than one family has enjoyed his generosity and has been given new hope and courage by his words in time of stress.

Perhaps he can attribute the success of his literary efforts for the most part to his sincerity. He devotes his writings almost entirely to subjects for and about the common people—the great middle class. Because the truest types of these people are generally found in the smaller towns, he "borrows" his neighbors as characters and their homey philosophy and speech for material. Central characters in his best work can be readily recognized as men and women of Fountain Inn.

So faithful is the pen that draws pictures of small town people and small town life that it is quite possible that his work may indeed live on after his real obituary is written, despite his lament in his fictitious "obituary" that he had never been able to "write something of permanent value."

By J. GUNNAR BACK

RECENTLY I asked Mark Schorer, author of "A House Too Old," a first novel, to tell me something of his experience marketing the manuscript.

It had occurred to me that Schorer's approach might be of service to stray



J. Gunnar Back

readers who actually have a novel on paper and want to know the most direct way of bringing it to the attention of a publisher. Schorer had had several stories in *Harpers* and *Scribners*, and some of the "lit-

tle" magazines had taken his work. Otherwise he was unknown.

Assuming that a novel has merits that publishers think will induce sale, there seems nothing intricate about getting it published, that is, about the mechanics of bringing it before editors who are able to put it into print. I quote from Mark Schorer's letter:

"After the book was finished (written on the typewriter, then rewritten in final form—and as far as I know, there aren't any rules for the set-up of mss. of novels; there are for technical books, but these vary with every publisher, each of whom has his own so-called "style sheet"), I sent it to my agent, the people who handle my shorter stuff. Agents, as you probably know, charge ten per cent on all sales returns for which they contract you—ordinarily, this includes serialization, foreign publication, movie rights, etc., as well as on regular royalties from American publication.

"The only advice I have on this score is to be wary of the agent who charges a reading fee or who makes a suggestion that he be allowed to collaborate with you or revise your ms. One can determine for himself whether such an agent is useful. In my case, I have secured the services of an agent who merely takes his 10 per cent off if he can place the ms.

"I advise the use of an agent because he knows the market, does his best to land the ms., and often his opinion, if he is reputed to be reliable, is as good as the publisher's own reader's opin-

ion, carrying a good deal of prestige. Also, the agent saves stamp money and nuisance if you happen not to live in New York. He protects you against exploitation in the hands of publishers, and does his best to get you the most satisfactory contract arrangements.

"In my own case, I'm convinced that my agent got me at least once again as large an advance on my book as I would have been able to get if I'd just sent the thing in myself. It was taken, as you know, by Reynal and Hitchcock, fairly new but very alive publishers with the weight of Blue Ribbon Books behind them. After that there was nothing but reading proof a couple of times, and the thing was published in about four months after its acceptance.

"As to what publishers are interested in young writers, I frankly do not know. I should venture to guess that the younger houses are more willing to take a chance on an author and I know that the younger houses give one's book more attention and take its production more seriously than an older house is likely to. I'm told that it's much better for an author who's just beginning to grow up with a firm than to find himself lost in the tremendous publishing lists of an old established firm."

Schorer closes his letter with the reservation that he speaks only of his personal experience and observation and that he may not have touched on certain other conditions that are equally valid. Your correspondent passes on the information for what it is worth to the newspaperman who finally bestirs himself and writes *That Novel*.

GEORGE A. DUNDON (Marquette '22) is director of publications of the Department of Health, Milwaukee, Wis.

WAYNE GARD (Grinnell Associate) has recently completed a biography of Sam Bass, the famous Texas bandit. The manuscript has been accepted for publication by a New York publisher next summer. Gard is a staff correspondent of the *Dallas News*.

MYRON R. BONE (Purdue '15) is editor of the *American Industrial Banker* and resides in Fort Wayne, Ind. He is a contributor of weekly sports articles to the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* and the *Lafayette (Ind.) Journal and Courier*.

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I Found a Way to Make Crime Pay

[Concluded from page 9]

undisputed King of the Pulp, touches on the point in his book, the "Graduate Fictioner." Quoting Harry:

"Men like Les White have it all over the rest of us on the detective stuff, because they know the inside . . . however, we have it over them because we have imagination enough to make up our own stuff as we go along and we're not held back by too much knowledge of what is actually done in the service and what is not."

There's a lot of sad truth in that paragraph of B-J's. After you've spent a decade in pushing criminals around it's hard to adjust your viewpoint to include some of the popular heroes of fiction, such as Philo Vance, et al. Get a stop watch, closely graduated, and I'll tell you just how long a hard-boiled homicide dick would tolerate friend Philo at the theater of a real crime!

But remember this—Philo made his creator a pile of money, so that's something else to think about! Perhaps that is why Harry Steeger, president of Popular Publications and one of the smartest, whitest guys in the business, told me that I would write better detective stories after I had been out of the detective business a few years and so changed my perspective. Maybe!

IF you really want to write detective stories—or any kind for that matter—go ahead and write 'em. Anything a professional tells you is probably a lot of hokey anyhow; I doubt if anyone really knows *how* he writes. A lot of it comes out of the subconscious, perhaps most of it. I think the old subconscious is like a tank; you fill it from the top and drain it out the bottom. If you don't keep it filled with fresh experiences, keep mentally alert, you'll run dry.

The mind is like a hen, you've got to fool it once in a while or production will fall off. Of course, you can't take your subconscious out in the woodshed and larrup it, but you can sort of lead it to water, so to speak. One trick—pull up your chairs because I don't want any psychiatrist to hear this crack—that some of us use is talking to our subconscious. The tools needed are simple, a sounding board and a little isolation. The wife makes a good board, or a dog will do. You work it something like this:

Prop up the wife, or the dog, and start arguing out loud. State the problem that is worrying you, and then

before anyone speaks, answer it yourself. Apparently the subconscious is an argumentative cuss because if you keep this up long he'll join the fight and tell you what's what. Then you write that down.

A dog is preferable to a wife for this act because your wife may yawn at just the wrong moment, bringing you back to your senses, whereas a dog will blink at you in open admiration—being as he can't understand your prattle, and this gives you confidence.

Those Country Scribes

[Concluded from page 5]

WE DID some things when I had the *Daily News*' state desk that worked perfectly, and I still think they're good.

We had an arrangement with all correspondents whereby they did NOT wire a story unless it was particularly hot, or unless they first sent a query. We seldom if ever turned down a telephone call or a telegram that brought news of a death, even if it were necessary sometimes to trim from 100 words to 25. We had an arrangement with undertakers in suburban towns that they call us when they got the bodies of people in their communities, giving survivors and funeral details. In smaller localities, undertakers were often the regular correspondents, so we rarely doubled up on that score. The death column, consequently, ran rather long at times.

We stressed the value of brevity for state news correspondents. They did not send telegrams that were highly skeletonized, but they were limited to 100 words unless specifically instructed otherwise.

In order to avoid duplication and unnecessary phone and wire tolls, we advised our correspondents exactly what we wanted on election days, sending form letters to all, personal letters to some, telling them what we were holding them responsible for, and pointing out that we depended upon them for some coverage for the *Associated Press* for which we were held responsible. The confidence thus placed turned out advantageously, because the correspondents felt an increased sense of "being in the game."

Two men worked the state desk of the *Daily News*. The assistant state editor came in at three-thirty and

SERIOUSLY, this is one of the surest methods of untying a bad knot in a story . . . talking it out. Occasionally the idea may not incubate at once, but give your subconscious a chance; it may take ten minutes, it may take a week. Long practice will develop this trait and pay huge dividends in increased production.

But there is one trick that a lot of professionals use and it is really the simplest and best known method of turning out salable fiction. This is probably the first time this secret has been exposed. Here it is:

Marry a woman who is smart enough to think up your plots, and then write 'em!

Anyhow, that's what I did.

worked until ten-thirty on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. On Thursday and Friday he came in at six, usually cleaning up all Sunday social by two or two-thirty. As a result we were well cleaned up on Saturday night.

IN ORDER to keep absolute tab on each correspondent (and there were 125 of them) I measured the paper daily for their copy, credited it to them, and by a little simple bookkeeping compared their lineage every week, or month, and so easily cut down on unimportant points, or stepped up the more vital points. It became fairly easy to build up the weak spots, because we knew just what was coming from each correspondent.

A little word of encouragement occasionally worked the proverbial wonders with correspondents, but too much praise made for voluminous efforts. I never failed to compliment a correspondent for a good piece of work, and I always made our position clear when copy became bad, too careless and unreadable.

No amount of supervision and coaching can make perfect correspondents of all those who gather the news of the sticks for a couple of dollars more or less per column. But a little conscientious work can make the country news-hounds live news sources. They serve their purpose, and every state editor knows that an inconspicuous country scribe may some day scoop the world.

They are a conglomerate lot, those country correspondents. They send in some terrible copy, but they're steady sources, and dependable as a rule. And that's what counts.

• THE BOOK BEAT •

How It Was Done

OUR TIMES: THE UNITED STATES, 1900-1925. Volume Six—THE TWENTIES, by Mark Sullivan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. xx + 674 pp. \$3.75.

From the standpoint of the writer, one of the most interesting things in this sixth and concluding volume of Mark Sullivan's "Our Times" series is Mr. Sullivan's explanation of how he has gone about the production of this series, the actual writing of which has consumed twelve years and the preparation therefor "more than twice twelve." Using the nomination of Harding as an example of his method, Mr. Sullivan writes:

"... The process began with composing the first draft. In making this, the ordinary sources were searched, the official proceedings of the Republican National Convention at Chicago in 1920, the newspaper files covering the months of the pre-nomination campaign and during the week of the convention, the report of certain Senate investigations and parts of the *Congressional Record* containing relevant material, the biographies, autobiographies, and other books that deal with or allude to the convention and the nomination. The material thus garnered was united with material of my own, notes I had made at the time, correspondence I had had, newspaper dispatches I had written. Out of all this the first draft was made.

"This early draft I sent to a job printer, with instructions to set it up and make fifty copies. These I sent to all those who had had any part in the events described and were still living, with requests that they read the drafts carefully and make notes of anything which, according to their recollections and records, was in error—any mistakes of fact, any omissions, anything which in their opinion was an error of judgment or an incorrectness of characterization. As a result of these requests, I received some 50 letters, practically all painstaking and voluminous—it is my experience that men are generous about this sort of enterprise."

Such a plan as this insures a high degree of accuracy and at the same time makes possible the inclusion of much new and hitherto unpublished information. The books, as a result, serve as highly entertaining and informative reading matter and also as valuable source material for future historians

interested in interpreting America of the period.

This series, as those who have read the earlier volumes know, has described life in the United States since the turn of the century. The emphasis in these volumes has been upon the more common aspects of life—the events that made the headlines in the newspapers, the fads, the songs that were popular, the books which were best-sellers, the plays which were Broadway successes, and so on.

In this sixth and last volume of the series, Mr. Sullivan is concerned with an unusually bizarre and colorful decade. These were the years, it will be remembered, of Harding and Coolidge, of "Teapot Dome," of prohibition, of the so-called "jazz age," of war books, and of the exploitation of sex in novels and on the stage. About all of these and similar topics Mr. Sullivan writes with the zest and graphic detail of the good reporter that he is. The dominant theme in this volume, however, is the Harding régime and the individuals and events related thereto that made the sensational newspaper headlines of the period.

Mr. Sullivan is a Washington correspondent of many years' experience. He was at one time editor of *Collier's Weekly*.—JOHN E. DREWRY, Henry W. Grady School of Journalism, The University of Georgia.

Below the Rio Grande

BULLETS, BOTTLES AND GARDENIAS, by Timothy G. Turner. 258 pp. The Southwest Press, Dallas, Tex. \$2.50.

Mexico has colored the lives of many newspapermen but none more so than that of Tim Turner who reported the Madero, Orozco, Carranza and Villa uprisings for the *Associated Press*. He recalls many of his amusing and exciting adventures in this autobiographical volume.

As his father and grandfather were newspapermen before him, it was only natural that Turner become one. He began as a reporter on his father's *Grand Rapids Herald* in Michigan and then went to work for the *Herald* in El Paso, Tex., which he earlier visited as a cowboy.

Because of his knowledge of Spanish, Turner covered Juarez, just across the Rio Grande, for the *Herald*. The Madero revolution in 1910 gave him his opportunity. For the next decade he

had a lot of fun and did an outstanding job of reporting what he calls "warfare in waltz time."

His book is one of Mexican and journalistic anecdote of the sort which arouses a healthy nostalgia for anyone who has ever worked in the scenes described. He recalls Chris Hagerty and William Shepherd weeping in an El Paso barroom over a lock of Mark Twain's hair. He includes the Spanish and English versions of "La Cucaracha" and other revolutionary songs.

Anecdotes are recorded involving William A. Willis, Felix Summerfeld, Bud Fisher, Lincoln Steffens, Richard Harding Davis, Jack Royle and many others. Of the Mexican figures, Carranza receives the most attention. Turner accompanied him on the west coast and later worked for his information service in the United States.

Turner left Mexico suffering with amoebic dysentery but does not regret his experiences below the Rio Grande. He devotes his book to these and passes lightly over his work for the *New York Telegram*, *New York Herald*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Leslie's Weekly* and other connections.

"I found I missed the association of newspapermen who, despite their faults are, I think, the best companions in the world," he writes. "If I had not been a newspaperman, I would have chosen to be a physician. Newspapermen and physicians have in common a detachment from ordinary life, and yet, unlike schoolmen and clergymen, are enough a part of life to be in touch with realities. They both know how to look on and laugh a little and work a lot."—TOM MAHONEY, *The Buffalo Times*.

Books and Authors

Hermann Hagedorn, whose biography of William Boyce Thompson, entitled "The Magnate," was recently published, is now at work on a biography of Robert Brookings which will probably be published in the fall of 1936. After completing the Brookings' biography Mr. Hagedorn is to write the biography of Edwin Arlington Robinson which will be published by The Macmillan Company.

It's quite a job for The Book Beat to keep up with this man Max Miller. We haven't yet reported on his "The Great Trek," published by Doubleday, Doran, and now another volume, "Fog and Men on Bering Sea," has just been issued by his usual publishers, Dutton's. It is based on experiences on the ice-breaker *Northland* on the Bering Sea.

Newspapers in Flux [Continued from page 4]

tive competition these days with any number of radio commentators on news. That very quality in Americans which makes them forbid their judges to interpolate comment from the bench, when proper comment frequently would be most helpful in arriving at the truth of an issue, has been a circumscribing influence as far as news reporting is concerned. I think the English have a larger measure of freedom in that than we do, without any great abuse of the privilege.

I see some efforts that are being made at the moment, timid experiments though they be, to meet the challenge that radio and news reviews have set for us. The *New York Times* review of the week, for instance, not only reviews news events, but puts them in their setting and does make some evaluation of their significance. The *Washington Star* recently embarked upon the experiment of preceding each story which had some antecedent development with two or three paragraphs of italic background. I observe, too, that the *Baltimore Sun* and the *New York Times* among others, not to mention our own paper, are putting in more and more editors' notes to clarify a statement for the reader. I would not for a moment suggest that we embark forthwith upon a radical change of news policies. We must feel our way in the first place, and in the second, we must raise the level of intelligence in our news departments to an even higher standard than we now maintain.

The publishers themselves must assume the blame for present and past standards in the news rooms. I do not believe that most of them realize what transition has been effected already; if they have it is not apparent in the pay envelopes of the men who make the personality, and to a large extent, fix the character of their papers. The scale of wages in the composing room, where the men are leagued in a union to demand a minimum wage and a maximum number of hours for that wage, beyond which they get overtime, is upon the whole higher than the scale in the news departments.

In this day most newspapers require, whether by direction or the indirection of setting up standards, that their men shall be college men. They have spent years in preparation, but in too many cases, when they have served their apprenticeship, they still draw pay only slightly higher than the galley boy's. It is incomprehensible to me how publishers can so underrate

the importance of their news forces, who are, after all, their personal emissaries in many cases, as to be willing to pay them street sweeper salaries while requiring of them an education, the equivalent of which is represented by a Master of Arts degree.

There is no substitute for intelligence in the newsroom, and there is no way of securing it without paying for it.

LONG ago I gave up the notion of filling a staff with brilliant drunks and cheap transients. We now do it very differently: by selection. We seek, first, university men. Secondly, if they have had school of journalism training, we consider that so much the more fortunate for both of us. We do not expect men to come to us from schools of journalism already full-fledged newspapermen; we expect only that they shall have manifested an interest in and a devotion to newspaper work; that they shall have a flare for writing and that they shall be willing to learn our ways. We do not bridle and harness them and say you must travel this rut. They may tell the story as they please, provided it contains all essential information. By that method, I believe, newspapers can vastly improve their news writing and bring freshness and color to the narration of ordinary events.

The same necessity for preparation for journalism is emphasized in the changes which editorial pages have undergone. Aside from the features, such as humor and special columns, which have come into the editorial pages in the past 25 years, the fiery personal journalism of the old colonel type has gone out of existence. Editorial columns are no longer used to vent personal spleen or, in decent newspapers, to serve personal interests.

Editorial writing used to be a simple matter, but it is not any longer. We are living in a complex world, whose problems are daily becoming more complicated. It is no longer possible for a newspaper which desires to hold public respect to be partisanly dogmatic. The editor who would serve the function of the editorial page must be given more to generating light than heat these days. It is not possible for a man who does not have a broad background of education and research, for a man who has not traveled and studied, to interpret intelligently to his community what is happening in the world, or to persuade his readers, upon a

basis of reason, to take a particular course in local or national affairs.

Mere words, even well written, no longer fulfill the purpose of an editorial page—which is to instruct, to enlighten and to persuade. Men who write editorials these days must know about such intricate things as constitutional history, interpretation of the ramifications of the utilities problem, about social security and its operations in other countries, and about a host of international agreements and situations.

There never was a greater demand for interpretive writing than there is at the moment.

THERE are those who say that editorial writing is a dying art. It is a dead art if he who does it is lifeless and colorless and weak and timid. The space is wasted unless the editor has something to say and the courage to say it. In the hands of a thoughtful, courageous man, the editorials may be still the most vital things in the paper.

Before the editor, as he sits down to write, are two columns of white space. When he has finished, he may have interpreted world events in the light of the world history; dictatorships in the light of the consulships of old Rome, and the New Deal relief in the light of the experience of the Gracchi. He may have brought his readers into contact with all the best in history and religion and literature; he may have interpreted the latest discovery of science in terms of importance comparable with Galileo's discoveries; he may have drawn from the storehouse of his mind all the years have laid up there and applied it to discussions of the vital problems of living. Or he may have turned out merely two columns of reading matter with nothing to distinguish it in excellence or vitality from the latest publicity blurb of the bureau of fisheries.

Since editorial writing is my first love, I must confess sorrowfully that my greatest disappointment during the depression has been the absence of a liberal note from most of the journals of America. Newspapers, like individuals, have been so wrapped up in their own problems, so affected by the changes and adjustments necessary during a period of economic pressure, that they have largely lost, and are only now beginning to recapture, an understanding of the primary obligation a newspaper has to promote the general welfare.

A great many editors have shouted that freedom of the press was being endangered, when too many of them did not have either the courage or the in-

[Concluded on page 17]

WHO · WHAT · WHERE

JOHN BABCOCK (Texas '34) has been promoted to managing editor of the *Austin Dispatch*. Babcock has been working as police reporter on the same paper.

★

LORIN D. AGEVINE (Washington '14), co-publisher of the *Ocean City Sentinel Register*, Ocean City, N. J., was awarded first place for front page excellency for publications in a state contest.

★

MILT BUONA (Washington '32) has purchased an interest in the *Camas* (Wash.) *Post*.

★

DAVID JAMES (Washington '32), who has been with the *Centralia Chronicle*, is now editor of the *Shelton* (Wash.) *Independent*.

★

MOSE MESHER (Washington '27) is in charge of publicity for the Cascade theater in Portland, Ore.

★

KIRBY E. TORRANCE (Washington '18) is with the Western Printing Company, Seattle, Wash.

★

WILLIAM VERAN, SR. (Washington Associate) of the *Independent*, Wapato, Wash., is public relations council for the Washington State Bankers Association.

★

BILL S. WILMOT (Washington '35) is publisher and editor of the *Ritzville* (Wash.) *Journal-Times*.

★

FRED L. WOLF, Newport, Wash. (Washington Associate) will be a candidate for lieutenant governor of the state of Washington in the next election.

★

FRANK LOCKERBY (Washington '22) is city editor of the *Tacoma News Tribune*.

★

JAMES BROWN (Washington and Lee '35) has been assigned to the Paris bureau of *International News Service*. Brown has been connected with the New York staff of *INS* since graduation.

★

ROBERT G. PATT (Kansas '35), has been on the advertising staff of the *Topeka* (Kan.), *Daily Capital* since Jan. 1.

NAMED EDITOR



Paul Scott Mowrer

Mr. Mowrer, associated with the *Chicago Daily News* since 1905, both in this country and abroad, has been named editor of that paper by Col. Frank Knox, publisher. Hal O'Flaherty succeeds the late Henry Justin Smith as managing editor of the *News*; John Craig becomes news editor and Lewis Hunt, city editor.

R. P. (Dick) WALL (Baylor '30), has accepted a position as advertising manager of Southwestern Drug Corporation, and is editing "Southwestern Drug Trade News."

★

JOHN CANNING, JR. (Grinnell '31) recently became assistant to CONGER REYNOLDS (Iowa '12), director of the public relations department of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, with offices in Chicago.

★

JOHN H. THOMPSON (Wisconsin '32) is with the *Watertown* (N. Y.) *Daily Times*.

★

GEORGE A. HARDING (Ohio State '31) is now editor of the *Ionia County News*, Ionia, Michigan. Harding formerly was with the *Monroeville Spectator*, Monroeville, Ohio.

★

LAWRENCE G. HAUCK (Ohio '33) has been transferred from the *Canton* (O.) *Repository* to the copy desk of the *Portsmouth* (O.) *Times*. Both are Brush-Moore papers.

★

EDMUND D. KENNEDY (Pittsburgh '30) is advertising and publicity manager for The Hays Corporation and for its affiliated company, the Carrick Engineering Company. He is now located in Michigan City, Indiana.

Newspapers in Flux [Concluded from page 16]

telligence to use that measure of freedom which was vouchsafed to them in the public interest. The American press is the freest in the world and will remain so. If our press ever loses its freedom to say what it pleases, it will be because it has forfeited public respect or abused it through serving its own and other special interests. To my mind nothing is more despicable than the trimmer; nothing is more to be despised than the flannel-mouthed Mr. Milquetoast who hems and haws and perhaps his way into oblivion.

SUBSCRIBERS have a right not only to the news of the world, but they have a right to expect in editorial discussion the utmost frankness, the utmost honesty and the utmost detachment from selfish interest.

No man who occupies an editorial chair should be conscious, as he writes, of any obligation save the obligation to the highest truth. He should have no enemies to punish unless his enmities are directed against those whose acts

are subversive of the public good; he should have no friends to reward unless his feeling of friendship is inspired by acts of excellence in the public good. When he discovers injustice, he should denounce it as injustice; when he discovers rascality, he should call it that; when he senses demagoguery, he should call it demagoguery; when he discovers excellence, he should call it excellence—nothing more and nothing less. There is no ultimate consequence to the editor who speaks out bravely except the enhancement of his own self-respect and the character of his newspaper.

There have been many changes in the quarter century in which I have been in newspaper work, but there has been no change in the principles which guide the successful publication of a newspaper: that principle which dictates that a newspaper must have adequate resources to collect the news, the intelligence to handle it, and the courage to comment upon it, frankly, unafraid, unawed and unsubsidized.

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AS WE VIEW IT

Street Sweeper Salaries

MUCH has been said about newspaper salaries—much more remains to be said in the future. Some publishers are trying to do something to elevate the wage level in their editorial rooms—others continue as they have in the past, to pay as little as they can and still keep their men at their desks. And in many instances those salaries are woefully inadequate. Everyone connected with the professional business of publishing knows it.

Seldom do you find a more outspoken statement on the subject than the remarks of Mark Ethridge, publisher of the Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*, appearing this month in *THE QUILL*. Speaking of the changes affecting the newspapers of today and in the days to come, he observes:

"The publishers themselves must assume the blame for present and past standards in the news rooms. I do not believe that most of them realize what transition has been effected already; if they have it is not apparent in the pay envelopes of the men who make the personality, and to a large extent, fix the character of their papers.

"The scale of wages in the composing room, where the men are leagued in union to demand a minimum wage and a maximum number of hours for that wage, beyond which they get overtime, is upon the whole higher than the scale in the news departments.

"In this day most newspapers require, whether by direction or the indirection of setting up standards, that their men shall be college men. They have spent years in preparation, but in too many cases, when they have served their apprenticeship, they still draw pay only slightly higher than the galley boy's. It is incomprehensible to me how publishers can so underrate the importance of their news forces, who are, after all, their personal emissaries in many cases, as to be willing to pay them street sweeper salaries while requiring of them an education the equivalent of which is represented by a Master of Arts degree.

"There is no substitute for intelligence in the news rooms, and there is no way of securing it without paying for it."

Father of the Half-tone

THERE lives and works in Philadelphia a man to whom the newspapers and magazines owe a great debt—Frederick Eugene Ives, inventor of the "half-tone" universally used today in the making of photo-engravings or cuts, and a pioneer in color printing of all kinds.

Numerous medals and more than a hundred patents bear witness—as do the pages of every newspaper and magazine—to his genius, accomplishments and continued experiments.

Friends and associates have never failed to mark his birthdays during the advancing years but as his 80th birthday approached recently others joined with them to do him honor. William N. Jennings, who made the first photograph of lightning in 1882, discussed before the Art Alliance of Philadelphia the artistic revolution brought about

by the numerous inventions of Mr. Ives pertaining to the graphic arts.

Then the School of Journalism at Temple University came into the picture. Prof. Henry E. Birdsong, accompanied by a group of students, presented Mr. Ives with a bouquet of roses on the eve of his birthday; Charles A. Wright, of the journalism

faculty, wrote a tribute to him that appeared in the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, and Dr. Harvey M. Watts, also of the journalism faculty, wrote a poem in Latin and English that was read at the birthday dinner. The English version of the latter follows:

"He found the works of genius known but to the few;

By his mechanic magic, color and design

The quintessence of beauty burgeoned as if new;

For, breaking through the hampering bonds that men confine,

With mastery of hand and mind and willing heart,

He freely gave to all the vision of great art!"

To all of which we would add our congratulations and appreciation.

Henry Justin Smith

NOTHING that we say can add to his renown or to the place he has won in the hearts of newspapermen the world over.

This man of whom an associate said: "He brought to journalism a new idea of news—the suggestion that good writing might be a part of it. He fostered and shaped the talents of youngsters on his staff. Newspapermen produced through his kindly encouragement are in the offices of great dailies in all parts of the civilized world, more of them, perhaps, than have been pushed to the top by any other single editor in the history of the printing press. He had a keen sense of the dramatic, a deep appreciation of that fragile and unanalyzable commodity called news."

He who inspired and encouraged other men to write—and wrote himself books that have won a lasting place in the literature of journalism and the field of history. Among his works were: "Deadlines: the Memoirs of a News Room," which became known internationally; "Josslyn," a newspaper novel; "Innocents Aloft," a book of travel; "Poor Devil," a story of a Loop worker; "Chicago, a History of Its Reputation," written in collaboration with Lloyd Lewis, *Daily News* drama critic, and, later, "Chicago: a Portrait," and "Chicago's Great Century." His recent works were "Senor Zero," a story of Columbus' voyage, and "Young Philips, Reporter."

This man of many talents—a capable pianist, an individual with a professional understanding of the opera, who could discuss symphony concerts as an authority, who had an expert's judgment of pictures—yet who was simple, direct and understanding—who had a sincere and kindly interest in the welfare of his fellow workers from office boy up.

Shall we, then, say simply that journalism cherishes the memory of and needs more men like Henry Justin Smith, managing editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, who has undertaken his last assignment.

AT DEADLINE

[Concluded from page 2]

maybe they'd go away. The pounding came again. It WAS our door.

Half-asleep I stumbled to the portal.

"Yes?" I demanded hazily—not very politely.

"Was," asked a voice in alcoholic accents, "you all asleep?"

"Yes—what do you want?" I asked.

"Well, if you all wasn't asleep I was going to ask you all to come out and help me celebrate New Year's—but if you all was asleep, you all go right back to bed!"

That's just what the sleepy Editor did. But there was no more sleeping. The cannonading was continuing. Further rest was impossible. New Year's Day finally dawned. As soon as breakfast was over, Mr. and Mrs. Editor lost no time in departing from Knoxville. It's a mighty fine city—but we've preferred to spend our New Year's Eves up North ever since.

STORIES don't always have to stick to seasons—so we'd like to bring you next a World Series yarn that just came to light recently. It appeared in the daily stint of our favorite columnist—H. C. L. Jackson, who writes "Listening in on Detroit" for *The Detroit News*.

"Sometimes," observed Jack, "it takes a man a long time to break down and confess something or other.

"Hurriedly I follow up that brilliant statement by saying that Bo-Bo the Batch has just told about a harrowing experience he had at the World Series.

"He had one of those 'Roving Reporter' badges which let him in the grandstand all right, but didn't grant him a seat unless it so happened that he could get away with one.

"During the first game, he discovered that three seats in the back of a lower-tier box weren't being used, so, with a wary eye for the ushers, he hid his badge and sat in the box. All went well. So well that, when the second game began, and the same three seats were unoccupied, he marched in, hid his badge, and sat down as though he owned the place.

"He was no more than settled than three men walked down the aisle to the box and looked at Bo-Bo.

"He started to get up, but the man nearest him smiled and said:

"'Oh, I guess there's room for four on these three seats.'"

"Bo-Bo breathed easier and compressed himself. That camaraderie so prevalent at a Series game wound the four sardines together. But by the

time of the seventh inning stretch, Bo-Bo's joints were pretty cramped.

"As they stood up, the man farthest from Bo-Bo muttered:

"'What a relief. This box is too darn crowded.'"

"The man next to Bo-Bo shot him a look. Bo-Bo braced himself. The man leaned across to the speaker and hissed:

"'Shut up. You want this box-holder to have us thrown out?'"

ARTHUR E. GOODWIN (Kansas State '25) has completed his third year as director of journalism at the Shawnee-Mission high

school, Merriam, Kan. During his three years as director of the high-school publication, *The Mission*, his students have participated in eight *Quill and Scroll* group contests, in each of which he has had at least a South Central States sectional winner, twice a national winner, once in feature writing and once in copyreading. *The Mission* holds a first-class honor rating from the National Scholastic Press Association and International First Place Award from *Quill and Scroll*, both for 1935.

★

Newspapers and citizens of the Texas Panhandle area have started a movement to draft DESKINS WELLS (Texas '24), publisher of the *Wellington Leader*, for the State Senate.

THE employment trend in The Personnel Bureau continues to climb upward, with advertising men—those trained in writing, layout, and soliciting for small dailies and weeklies—being most in demand at the moment. Combination editorial-advertising men for small dailies and weeklies, publicity writers and business paper writers are being given opportunities for changes and some advancement.

Employers desire men with several years of practical experience—from two to ten years—on daily newspaper editorial and advertising staffs, and offer, on the whole, some chance for advancement and a fair salary for the work to be done.

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